

VZCZCXYZ0004
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHUL #0833 1160909
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 250909Z APR 08
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9539
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4132
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 8685
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4284
RHMFISS/COMUSFK SEOUL KOR
RHMFISS/COMUSKOREA J5 SEOUL KOR
RUACAAA/COMUSKOREA INTEL SEOUL KOR
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//OSD/ISA/EAP//

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 000833

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: AFTER KOREAN REUNIFICATION
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [KS](#) [EUN](#)
SUBJECT: ROK NOT ABLE TO SPONSOR PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE
DECLARATION

REF: STATE 40380

Classified By: POL M/C Joseph Y. Yun. Reasons 1.4(b/d)

(C) On April 18 poloff delivered reftel points to MOFAT's Jang Hyun-cheol, Deputy Director of the Human Rights Division. Jang said that he would need to check with the Ministry of Defense (MND) and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) on two issues that might prevent Korea from sponsoring this declaration. On April 25, Deputy Director Jang told us that Korea would not be able to sponsor the declaration because of MND's concern that conscientious objectors who are required to serve jail time in Korea would be in opposition to the declaration. (NOTE: Korea has a system of compulsory military service for 24 months for all able-bodied males. Conscientious objectors can be sentenced to jail time if they choose not to fulfill their military obligation. END NOTE). Although Jang had not received an official response from the MOJ, he said that they were also likely to raise an objection to supporting the declaration because of Korea's National Security Law (NSL) that prohibits South Koreans from engaging in actions that support North Korea. Violation of the NSL can also result in a jail sentence which would be in conflict with the tenets of the Declaration on Conscientious Objectors, Jang said.
VERSHBOW